



## How do people update? The effects of local weather fluctuations on beliefs about global warming

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### Abstract:

Global warming has become a controversial public policy issue in spite of broad scientific consensus that it is real and that human activity is a contributing factor. It is likely that public consensus is also needed to support policies that might counteract it. It is therefore important to understand how people form and update their beliefs about climate change. Using unique survey data on beliefs about the occurrence of the effects of global warming, I estimate how local temperature fluctuations influence what individuals believe about these effects. I find that some features of the updating process are consistent with rational updating. I also test explicitly for the presence of several heuristics known to affect belief formation and find strong evidence for representativeness, some evidence for availability, and no evidence for spreading activation. I find that very short-run temperature fluctuations (1 day-2 weeks) have no effect on beliefs about the occurrence of global warming, but that longer-run fluctuations (1 month-1 year) are significant predictors of beliefs. Only respondents with a conservative political ideology are affected by temperature abnormalities.

**Source:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10584-012-0615-1>

### Resource Description

#### Communication: ☒

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

#### Communication Audience: ☒

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

#### Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Temperature

**Temperature:** Fluctuations

#### Geographic Feature: ☒

## Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

### **Geographic Location:**

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

### **Health Impact:**

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

### **Resource Type:**

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

### **Timescale:**

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified